

**maybe i'm my own
greatest fear**

orphan_account

maybe i'm my own greatest fear by orphan_account

Category: IT (2017), IT - Stephen King

Genre: (i see richie as finn though lmao whoops), I suck at tagging, M/M, also pennywise doesn't exist bc i'm not about that life, and bev is a lesbian i don't make the rules, modern high school au, not sure yet where i'm going with this it might be good it might be shitty, possible stenbrough, this is probably gonna be a mix of the book and the 2017 film

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Summary:

It's senior year, and Richie Tozier isn't ready. He's not ready to graduate, he's not ready for college, but more than anything- he's not ready to leave his friends, or his boyfriend. Despite everything, Richie is going to try to make every moment count- if not for his own sake, then for Eddie's.

1. Chapter 1

October 27th, 2017

*“Say, won't you say forever, stay
If you stay forever, hey
We can stay forever young”*

“God, Richie, how the hell are you better at doing your makeup than I am?”

Beverly Marsh grinned at her best friend, who was finishing up a dramatic eyeshadow look in the mirror hung on her closet door.

“What can I say? I’m the most talented person you’ll ever meet. It’s a shame you two and the rest have been calling me Trashmouth Tozier since middle school, when you could have been calling me Talented Tozier.” Richie spritzed setting spray on his face, flinching a little from the chill of the liquid. He turned to face Beverly and Eddie. “How do I look?”

“Wow.” Richie’s boyfriend was the first to respond. Eddie, admittedly, was always floored by Richie, but tonight- he was radiant, glowing- and Eddie wasn’t sure if it was from the shimmery highlight on his cheeks or the sheer confidence Richie gave off. Richie had tried something new that night- his usual makeup routine was smudging black eyeliner along his waterline, sleeping in it, and insisting that just touching it up every morning was ‘the punk way’. So seeing his boyfriend glammed up with a glittery black and silver smokey eye and dark red lipstick and- holy shit- fake eyelashes, was a pretty drastic change for Eddie.

“Wow? Is that a good wow?”

“Yeah, you look awesome babe,” Eddie said, smiling, “Very Rocky Horror.”

“‘Very Rocky Horror’ is a good description. That look would give Doctor Frank-N-Furter himself heart palpitations,” Bev looked at Eddie, “He’s wearing platforms tonight as well- I think he just wants to rub it in that he’s the tallest one in the group.”

Richie rolled his eyes at Bev, “I’m gonna fucking rock those platforms, thank you very much.” He smiled at Eddie and kissed his cheek, leaving a smear of lipstick behind. “And thank you, Eds. I couldn’t ask for a better Rocky Horror Homecoming date.”

Since the first time Richie had dragged his friends to a midnight showing of Rocky Horror Picture Show, all seven of them had gone back to the revival movie theatre downtown every friday night for Rocky Horror. Sometimes they would get dressed up, yell at the screen, throw toast, the whole shebang, but other nights they would sit in the back, and enjoy the film.

That particular night was the Derry High School Homecoming dance, which Richie and his friends were all skipping to go to Rocky Horror. They decided the theme for tonight would be ‘Rocky Horror Formal’- they would get all dressed up, and instead of partaking in the Classic American Tradition of dancing the Cupid Shuffle in the sweaty high school gym, they would be doing the Time Warp and yelling profanities at a film that was over forty years old. Beverly, Richie, and Eddie were getting ready at Bev’s house, while Mike, Ben, Bill, and Stan were getting ready at Bill’s house.

Richie lived for nights like this, nights where he could just have fun with his friends. Nights where he could forget about homework and college applications and the looming darkness that was adulthood, and just laugh and sing and be a kid.

Richie, Eddie, and Beverly waited outside Bev's house for the rest of their friends to pick them up in Ben's cherry red mini-van. He was the first to get his license, and although they had made fun of his vehicle endlessly ('Hey Benny, the kids are ready for soccer practice!'), it was a big enough car to fit all seven of the gang, and it was nice to have the freedom to just drive wherever, without parents, music up and the windows down. Before Richie got his car, he and Ben would go on drives together. They'd listen to eighties pop music, and talk about books and gossip. Richie was just grateful to get out of the house for a while.

The three of them probably looked rather odd to someone driving past- Richie, who was already taller than Bev and Eddie, now towered over them because of his platforms. He was holding hands with Eddie, and the height difference was so dramatic it was almost comical. They were all dressed like it was 1989 and they were going to a 'creative black tie' punk concert. Bev looked at Richie and Eddie and grinned- out of all of their friends, Bev was the most excited when Eddie and Richie officially got together. She pulled her polaroid camera- an actual, vintage polaroid, not the cheap knock-off version- out of her purse and stood in front of Eddie and Richie.

"Smile, guys!"

"Hold on!" Richie said, and before Bev could snap the photo, he scooped Eddie up in his arms and held him bridal style. Beverly laughed at the pose, and took the photo. She shook it once, and put her camera and the developing photo back in her purse.

Ben's van pulled up to the curb, and Eddie, Richie, and Bev piled into the backseat.

"You guys look so good!" Mike said, grinning at the three of them from the front of the car.

"Oh Michael," Richie said, in a vaguely British accent, "You say that as if we don't always look this fabulous."

—

By the time Rocky Horror was over, it was two a.m., the perfect time for a late night drive.

Looking out of the van windows, Eddie quietly pointed out the constellations to Richie, who had his head resting on his boyfriend's shoulder. A soft song was playing through the car stereo, and there was a warm feeling in the van. It didn't need to be said aloud- but in that moment, everyone was calm and content. The love they all had for each other was so strong, it didn't need to be said explicitly for everyone to know that in that car, there were six people who would be have their back, unconditionally.

That peaceful feeling was broken, however, when Beverly got ahold of the AUX cord, and Avril Lavigne started blasting from the speakers.

“Singing Radiohead at the top of our lungs

With the boom box blaring as we're falling in love

Got a bottle of whatever, but it's getting us drunk

Singing here's to never growing up”

Ben, Bev, Mike, Stan, Bill, Richie, and Eddie sang the song at the top of their lungs. Richie sang the loudest, of course, and he and Eddie grabbed hands and serenaded each other.

In that moment, all of Richie's cares melted away.

That night, Richie and Stan were spending the night at Bill's house. Stan crashed almost as soon as he laid down, but Bill and Richie stayed up, staring up at Bill's bedroom ceiling and talking softly so they didn't wake Stan up- Stan *did not* like to be woken up- Richie had learned that the hard way.

“Bill, I'm not- I'm not ready for high school to be over. I don't want to go to college and drift apart from you guys and I- like the song- I never wanna grow up.”

“D-dude, we're only a month into senior year. Don't let Avril g-get to you.”

“I guess.” Richie said, but still, something tugged at his heart. He didn't want to accept it, but he knew that no matter what his friends said, no matter how much they reassured him that they'd all be connected in some way forever, he knew that after graduation, everything would change.

2. Chapter 2

November 1st, 2017

“Let's sell all our shit, and run away

to sail the ocean blue

Then you'll know,

that my heart is true”

Richie had had a series of long mornings- he had never been a morning person, and school just made it worse, but his senior year was the worst by far. Richie had no motivation to get up in the mornings anymore. He was known for showing up to his first class of the day fifteen minutes late, with a cup of iced coffee in his hand, shrugging at the glare his teacher shot at him. He had started missing the morning announcements- when Eddie noticed, he always took the time to write them all down in a neat, bullet-pointed list (in pink pen, because he knew Richie liked pink), and hand the list to Richie as soon as he slid into the seat next to him in their second period Spanish class.

By lunchtime, Richie had finally started to wake up. the monotone bell rang, dismissing him from his last morning class. He slung his bag over his shoulder and walked to the cafeteria.

He was the first of his friends to arrive at their go-to lunch table. He pulled out his phone while he waited for his friends, and tried to check his messages on tumblr. Richie had received a message from inhalinghappiness- Eddie- but mobile tumblr was the bane of his existence and the Internet barely worked on school grounds for whatever reason, so nothing was loading.

As soon as Richie gave up on trying to open the message, Eddie himself slid into the seat next to him and kissed his cheek. Richie smiled- he loved affection, and even after nearly a year and a half of being with Eddie, he still got butterflies when Eddie did something as simple as kissing his cheek.

"Hey you, how's your day going?" Richie asked.

Eddie pulling his lunch bag out of his backpack, sighed, "Not so good. My government class is killing me, we have a huge test on Friday and if I fail it I'm gonna fail the whole class and i'm not going to get into any good colleges and-"

"Eds. I'll help you study tonight, if you want! You're gonna make that test your bitch."

"You're ridiculous." Eddie grinned- he was grateful to have a boyfriend who doubled as his own personal cheerleader.

The rest of the group took their places at the lunch table- Mike sat next to Eddie, and Bill, Stan, Bev, and Ben sat across from them. They all had lunch trays from the school cafeteria. Richie didn't eat lunch at school often- he didn't want to eat the shitty prison-esque food served by Derry High School and he didn't have the motivation to make his own lunch. Richie did, however, grab a Diet Coke out of his bag- to the chagrin of his friends.

"Richie, how the hell do you drink that shit?" Bev said, gesturing to his soda can.

“Seriously, it’s super unhealthy. And it’s not healthy that you’re not eating, either.” Mike looked over at Richie, concerned. Richie had always admired Mike, who always seemed able to tell when something was wrong with one of his friends. Mike was the most compassionate person Richie had ever met, and not just with his friends- he cared so deeply about animals, and the Earth, it was kind of amazing. Mike was president of the DHS environmental club- and rightfully so.

Richie, putting on his ‘I don’t give a shit’ attitude, took a sip of his Diet Coke and shrugged. “If I die from drinking too much aspartame then so be it.”

His comment was met with eye rolls from his friends, and Bev, thankfully, changed the subject to the girl in her gym class that she was madly in love with- Cristin something? Richie didn’t know her, but he was happy that after years of struggling with compulsory heterosexuality and internalized homophobia, Bev was finally able to accept herself and be open about her sexuality. She had come a long way since she cried in the passenger seat of Richie’s car to a Mary Lambert song and told him that she liked girls.

At the end of the lunch period, Stan and Bill were the first to leave- they had child development class together, and the classroom was on the opposite side of the building. Bev left next, eager to get to her drama class (“It’s playwright day you guys! I have a legitimate reason to talk about Oscar Wilde!”). Mike and Ben left for science and calculus, respectively, leaving Eddie and Richie alone at the table.

Richie checked the time on his phone. It was 12:05, the bell was going to ring in five minutes and he felt his stomach tighten from a

mix of hunger and anxiety and dread- the thought of going to the rest of his classes made him want to puke.

“Wanna ditch? I don’t think I can handle the rest of the day.” Richie said, hoping his boyfriend wouldn’t notice his voice shaking. The worst part of having anxiety for Richie was the crying- it didn’t matter if he was thought-spiralling about global warming at two in the morning or getting anxious over nothing at all- when Richie’s anxiety acted up, he almost always cried.

He didn’t want to worry Eddie, and he didn’t want to make a scene, so Richie tried his best to hold back the tears.

Eddie, of course, could tell that something was wrong and Richie didn’t want to talk about it. He read Richie easily- when you’re as close with someone as Eddie was with Richie, you could have an entire conversation in one glance. “Lead the way, Tozier.”

Hand in hand, Richie and Eddie made their way to the student parking lot. Richie unlocked his car- it was an old blue car, and although it looked nice enough from the outside, the upholstery on the seats was tearing, there was no plug-in for an AUX cord, and on roads with potholes- which was almost every road in Derry- the car practically vibrated. It was worn down and could break down at any moment- and Richie loved it. He worked his ass off to buy that car, and although it had seen better days, it was Richie’s pride and joy.

Eddie loved it too, he loved the memories he had made sitting in the passenger seat, singing along to the radio, going on long drives, leaning on the hood of the car and watching the sunset. He thought of Richie when he picked Eddie up to go to junior prom the year previously- standing in front of his car, in his suit, holding a bouquet of daisies- his bowtie was the same shade of blue as the car. He

thought of the night they got together, the night Richie pulled into an empty church parking lot and kissed him for the first time- some of the best times Eddie had had in high school happened in that car.

Richie pulled out of the parking lot, and started driving- he didn't know where he was going, but that was okay. Eddie fiddled with stations on the radio, finally settling on a station playing some Cyndi Lauper song.

"Hey, by the way, what was that thing you sent me on tumblr?" Richie said, glancing at Eddie, then back at the road.

"Oh, it was a moodboard. Pastel and punk boyfriends, or something like that. It was very us."

"Very us. I'll make sure to reblog it later." Richie smiled. He was feeling a little better, and he was grateful that Eddie was with him. Eddie was the one constant in his life- while the cold of winter was settling in, and everything around him was changing, Eddie was there to hold his hand and fill him with warmth.

Richie drove to his house, and pulled into the empty driveway. His parents weren't home, not like that was anything out of the ordinary.

"Looks like we have the house to ourselves," Richie said with a wink, putting his car in park.

Eddie rolled his eyes. "Beep beep, babe. We're ditching school, we

might as well get something productive done. Can I help you with your common apps essay?”

Richie groaned. The last thing he wanted to do was think about college, let alone the daunting application process, and the essay prompt that had been haunting him since school started.

Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

Richie had stared at the prompt on many late nights, along with his laptop cursor blinking on a a blank computer screen, hoping that if he stared at the prompt for long enough, he would magically find the words that would get him into whatever college he wanted to get into. He had no such luck.

“Can we not? I promise I’ll work on it tonight. I’ll add you to the Google Doc and you can watch me write if it’ll make you feel better.”

“Fine. Movie?”

“Mean Girls?”

“Sounds good.”

So Richie and Eddie curled up on the couch, and watched Mean Girls.

They would never admit to anyone else how much they loved that movie, but Mean Girls was Richie and Eddie's go-to date night movie. It was a feel-good movie, and in Richie's opinion, it was a modern American cinematic masterpiece.

Eddie layed his head on Richie's chest, and Richie wrapped his arms around Eddie. Eddie's eyes were drooping, despite it being so early, he was so comfortable he wanted to fall asleep in Richie's arms. Richie was falling asleep too- but he whispered, as the credits rolled, "Eds?"

"Yeah, Richie?"

"Will you run away with me?"

"Maybe tomorrow. Gotta sleep now,"

"Okay Eds. I love you."

"I love you too, Tozier."

Richie and Eddie fell asleep like that, and Richie dreamed of running away, he dreamed of the ocean, he dreamed of Eddie, Eddie's hair, Eddie's smile, Eddie kissing him on the beach, Eddie telling Richie that he loved him- over and over again until the words lost their meaning.

And Richie never wanted to wake up.

Author's Note:

thank you to c for editing and helping me pick the title and just generally being a good sport about reading my probably shitty fanfic, and thank you to s for reassuring me that it was good enough to post online. you guys rock.